

THE LOTUD LANGUAGE

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0. INTRODUCTION

Little is recorded about the origins of the Lotud language, except that it is related to other 'Dusun' languages. Appell (1968) gives some evidence for cultural ties with Rungus and suggests that Lotud speakers might have migrated to their present location from other Dusunic areas, but this is inconclusive.

Like other languages in Sabah, Lotud is only one of the names given to the language under consideration in this paper. In Dusunic villages around the town of Tuaran TN the language is known as 'Dusun Tuaran'. Other ethnonyms are 'Latud', 'Latod', 'Suang Lotud' and 'Dusun Lotud'. One dialect of this language spoken in the area around the town of Telipok KK is referred to as 'Dusun Kadayan' by its speakers. In this paper the term Lotud is used to refer to all of the villages which appear to belong to this language group.

The number of speakers of Lotud is approximately 5,000,¹ most of whom live in the areas near the towns of Tuaran TN, Tamparuli TN and Telipok KK (Figure 1).

1. LEXICOSTATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION

Smith's classification (in this volume) of Lotud as a distinct language is based on relations with other Dusunic languages which are lower than 75 percent of shared cognates (PSC). Clayre (1966:6), using a different diagnostic word-list, found that Lotud "is quite separate from all other Dusun dialects and must in fact be regarded as a separate but related language."

Within the Lotud language itself Smith postulates two dialects, "a Lotud dialect chain found only in Tuaran and represented ... by five wordlists each of which is related to the dialect chain by at least 85 PSC, and a dialect identified as Dusun Kadayan as spoken in Sumagit KK which is related to the Lotud dialect chain in the range of 80-82 PSC ..." (see p.28 in this volume). Figure 2 shows these PSC relations.

Julie K. King and John Wayne King, eds *Languages of Sabah: a survey report*, 237-243. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-78, 1984.

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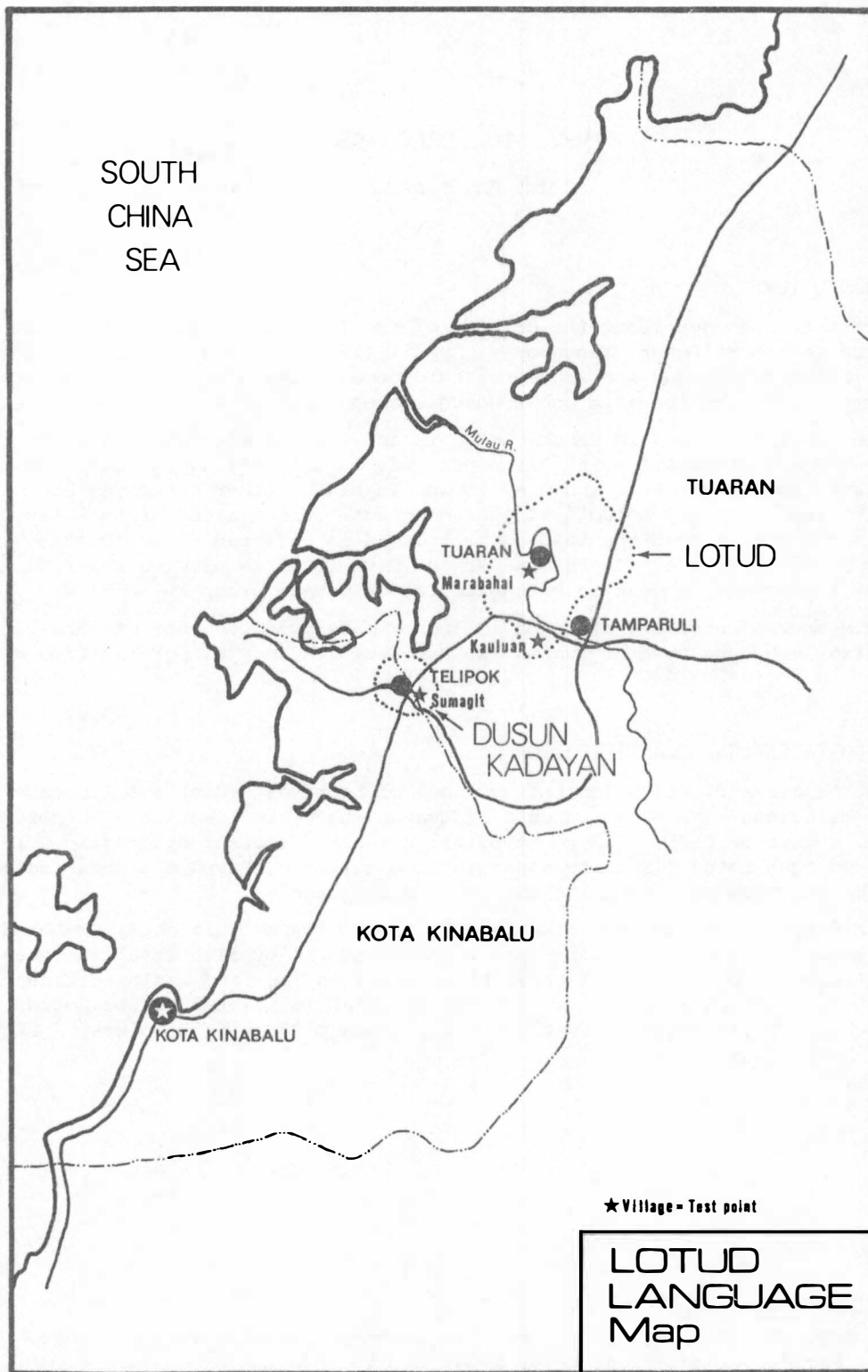


Figure 1: Lotud language map

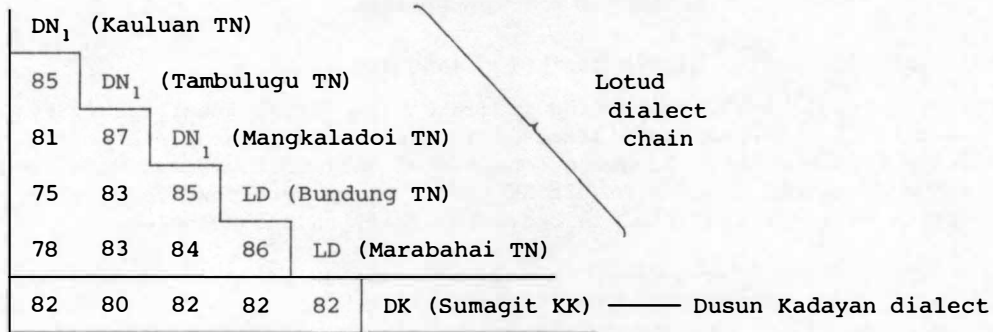


Figure 2: PSC relations of six villages of the Lotud language (per Smith, in this volume). (DN₁ = "Dusun" representing Lotud; LD = Lotud; DK = Dusun Kadayan.)

2. TESTING PROCEDURES

The purpose of dialect intelligibility testing in this study was to clarify the relationships among the Lotud dialects and to better understand the position of Lotud in the Dusunic language family. Testing was also done to determine the status of the Dusun Kadayan dialect within the Lotud language.

Marabahai TN representing Lotud was used as a reference tape for testing the ability of six of the more linguistically central Kadazan/Dusun villages to understand Lotud.

For testing within the Lotud language three test points were chosen: Kauluan TN and Marabahai TN which are on either end of the dialect chain and Sumagit KK representing the Dusun Kadayan dialect. The story tapes from each of these villages were also used as reference tapes (though in the first testing at Sumagit KK, the Kauluan TN reference tape was not used).

Other reference tapes used in the test set were Malangang Baru TN, or Tenghilan TN, representing geographically close Dusun dialects; Bundu Tuhan RU, representing a linguistically central Kadazan/Dusun village and Bunduon PG, representing the Coastal Kadazan dialect of Kadazan/Dusun (the dialect which is used on radio and in the newspapers). The final tape was the national language story.

The Kauluan TN reference story was good. The Marabahai TN story was also good, though possibly a bit easy. The Sumagit KK story was not as good a test since it was a story about the procedures of planting and so the theme and content were familiar. It was also a very short story. All of the tapes were of good technical quality.

The Kadazan/Dusun tapes used in the set were also all of good technical quality. The Bundu Tuhan RU story was a very clear tape, but has been found to be quite easy to understand all over the Kadazan/Dusun area. The story is simple and the words used are common everyday terms. In contrast, the Malangang Baru TN story deals with more specific items that would tend to be different across dialects. The Bunduon PG story is a good test, while the Tenghilan TN story is about the procedures of farming, so would tend to be more easily understood.

3. TEST RESULTS

3.1 Mutual intelligibility within the Lotud language

Results of intelligibility testing indicate high mutual intelligibility between the three Lotud-speaking villages (Figure 3). In general, these figures would indicate that the Lotud language consists of only one homogeneous dialect. Since both the Marabhai TN and Sumagit KK test stories were considered easy, further testing would be essential in order to verify this conclusion.

REFERENCE TAPES TEST POINTS	Marabhai TN	Kauluan TN	Sumagit KK
Marabhai TN	--	89 (78)	98 (82)
Kauluan TN	99 (78)	--	97 (79)
Sumagit KK	97 (82)	97 (79)	--

Figure 3: Mutual intelligibility test results within the Lotud language. (Scores are given as percentages; PSC relations are given in parentheses.)

3.2 Lotud understanding of Kadazan/Dusun

Results of intelligibility testing in Lotud villages using Kadazan/Dusun reference tapes were consistently much higher (80-98%) than the corresponding PSC relations (67-75) (Figure 4). The scores on the Bundu Tuhan RU reference tape are probably higher than they would normally be, due to the very easy story used. The lower 80% score at Sumagit KK using the Malangang Baru TN reference tape cannot be commented on until it is compared with results from further testing of the Malangang Baru TN reference tape.

The major factor in Lotud speakers' understanding of Kadazan/Dusun is the significant amount of contact with the larger Kadazan/Dusun community. Lotud villages are surrounded by Kadazan/Dusun villages, Lotud students go to school with Kadazan/Dusun students, they have contact in the markets, etc. The Lotud speakers generally refer to themselves as Dusun or Kadazan, considering themselves a part of the larger group.

Intelligibility testing shows clearly that Lotud speakers understand Kadazan/Dusun as if it were the same language as their own.

REFERENCE TAPES		KADAZAN/DUSUN			
		Bundu Tuhan RU	Bunduon PG	Malangang Baru TN	Tenghilan TN
TEST POINTS					
LOTUD	Marabahai TN	95 (71)	86 (70)		90 (67)
	Kauluan TN	98 (75)	89 (75)		97 (75)
	Sumagit KK	98 (70)	92 (71)	80 (70)	

Figure 4: Results of intelligibility testing in Lotud villages using reference tapes from Kadazan/Dusun villages. (Scores are given as percentages; PSC relations are in parentheses.)

3.3 Kadazan/Dusun understanding of Lotud

As Figure 5 shows, intelligibility of Lotud by six linguistically central Kadazan/Dusun villages ranges widely from 52% to 89%, while PSC relations only range 69-72 PSC. Two villages show high intelligibility, Kogopon PR (89%) and Pukat TN (89%). Sunsuron TA and Tangaban TA show much lower intelligibility at 56% and 52% respectively. Lack of contact may be a factor in explaining these two lower scores, but cross-testing and more information are needed before any further conclusions can be drawn about Kadazan/Dusun understanding of Lotud.

4. NATIONAL LANGUAGE INTELLIGIBILITY

Intelligibility scores on the Bahasa Malaysia story were generally high (Figure 6). Marabahai TN and Kauluan TN both registered 94%, whereas Sumagit KK showed a somewhat lower score of 82%. The reason for this lower score was that one older woman declined taking the rest of the national language test after missing the first two answers. (If that one score were disregarded, the average would be 91%.)

Higher national language comprehension in the Lotud area is expected since most Lotud villages are near economic centres such as Tuaran TN, Tamparuli TN and Telipok KK, all of which have schools. Education in Bahasa Malaysia is the key factor in intelligibility, but even some with no formal education had high scores.

In the three villages tested an average of one third of the homes now use Bahasa Malaysia for communication at least part of the time, the highest percentage being in Marabahai TN where half of the homes tested do so.

REFERENCE TAPE		LOTUD Marabhai TN
TEST POINTS		
KADAZAN/DUSUN	Kogopon PR	89 (70)
	Pukat TN	89 (71)
	Kionsom KK	81 (70)
	Toboh TA	77 (69)
	Sunsuron TA	56 (72)
	Tangaban TA	52 (70)

Figure 5: Intelligibility testing results in six linguistically central Kadazan/Dusun villages using a Lotud reference tape. (Scores are given as percentages; PSC relations are in parentheses.)

TEST POINTS	AVG. SCORE	SEX M/F	AGE		EDUCATION		
			AVG.	RANGE	ED.	A.E.R.	A.E.S.
Marabhai TN	94	5/5	33	19-54	9	8	7
Kauluan TN	94	5/5	35	13-63	7	6	5
Sumagit KK	82	6/4	39	14-70	5	4	4

Figure 6: Lotud intelligibility of the national language tape with sociological data. (Scores are given as percentages; the education data for each village are listed as the number of persons in the test corpus who had received formal education (ED.), the average years of education which those subjects had received (A.E.R.), and the average years of education per subject in the test corpus as a whole (A.E.S.).)

5. CONCLUSION

Lexicostatistical figures clearly show Lotud as a separate language from Kadazan/Dusun, and lower intelligibility scores by linguistically central Kadazan/Dusun villages in their understanding of Lotud confirm this. However, on the local communication level Lotud functions for all practical purposes as a dialect of Kadazan/Dusun with Lotud speakers readily comprehending the larger Kadazan/Dusun language.

Within Lotud itself there seem to be some fundamental differences, i.e. Kauluan TN and/or Sumagit KK may be separate dialects from the rest of Lotud, based on the lexicostatistical comparison. But it is hard to prove by the intelligibility testing that has been done that there is more than one dialect in Lotud. Much contact between speakers of what might be different dialects of Lotud facilitate learning of dialect idiosyncrasies.

Study is needed on a deeper level to understand more fully Lotud's position within the Dusunic languages and the relationship between the various Lotud villages.

NOTE

1. This figure is based on population figures given for each village which speaks Lotud in a report from the District Officer of Tuaran District.

